1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

Teheran with telegrams and memorials against the irreligion of the Shah, the new Persian Constitution, and the Russian penetration.

The non-Muslim minorities, economically a leading element in the towns though socially segregated and governmentally unimportant, retained their lead in their chosen occupations. To the shock of compulsory military service, first imposed in 1909, they reacted characteristically: the Jews, if they could not buy exemption, determined to succeed as soldiers and plunged into drill and military studies, while the Christians adopted every means of evading it by flight, bribes, and falsified registers. Their European contacts increased, and English was increasingly taught in their schools. The Alliance Israélite opened schools at Mosul and Ḥilla, Baṣra, Khaniqin, and 'Amara. The Archbishop's Assyrian mission, through Dr. W. A. Wigram, founded a school at Bibaydi near 'Amadiya. The Carmelite and Dominican missions, with their schools, dispensaries, and printing-presses, were active as ever among the Uniates, the Americans among all classes in southern 'Iraq, the C.M.S. among the Protestants of Baghdad and Mosul, while a German school was opened in 1909. Ill feeling between the Chaldaean and Assyrian communities—the former with jealous French assistance, the latter with hourly appeals for British support—exploded into angry controversy on the question of separate status and registration. Many Chaldaeans, it was said, would gladly have rejoined their old community under the Mar Sham'un if only foreign protection were forthcoming equal to that of the Papal Delegate. The first mention in 'Iraq of a young and then unmenacing movement, Zionism, created no alarm, though Zionist commissions twice arrived from Europe to report on immigration possibilities, and a Jewish pamphlet circulated in 1913 urged the bold policy of demanding Palestine itself.

Security in the towns was in normal times moderately maintained, and would always improve immediately under a strong Wali; the sound of shooting by night was familiar but usually meaningless. Detection of crime was pressed with neither skill nor determination. Anti-Christian or anti-Jewish crime or agitation, on a petty scale, was always ready to appear and little condemned. Most disturbances of the peace came, however, either from the desperation of the hungry, whom in times of near-famine (as at Mosul in 1913) the hoarding of food by merchants drove to burglary and murder, or from the presence in many cities of established gangs of criminals. In Baṣra an aggressive bodyguard was among the resources of Sayid Ṭalib; in Mosul and Sulaymaniya leading citizens—Muḥammad Sabunchi Pasha in the first, the Barzinji shaykhs in the second—were served at need by gangs of bravos; and in the country towns dominated by powerful tribesmen, the crimes of the shaykhs'

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

Haydar, the Finance Minister, and indicated an anticipated expenditure of £11 million in four years. For the moment, great loss was incurred by the disastrous fire which raged on and after 27 August in the Suq al-'Aṭṭariya of Baghdad and was extinguished only after great efforts. The Jews, as usual, were blamed. Slack demand and low prices in the date trade in 1938 and 1939 strained to excess the organization and harmony of the Date Board (p. 262) and led to its replacement, under a new law, by a Date Association in 1939. This was endowed with larger funds and powers, and a field of action covering all southern 'Iraq and all branches of growing and marketing. H. I. Lloyd, a veteran of the 'Iraq service as administrator and judge, became Director-General. An early act of the Association was to grant to Messrs. Andrew Weir a five-year monopoly for handling the purchase and export of packed dates.

The outbreak of War in September 1939 led in Baghdad inevitably to a period of financial and commercial panic, with suspension of credit, a run on the banks, buying and hoarding of food and stocks, and an abrupt rise in prices. But confidence was quickly restored and, though some dislocation of communications and shortage of shipping were felt, economic conditions returned almost to normal. In spite of the State of Emergency declared and the issue of a 'Decree for the organization of 'Iraq's economic resources' with nominal Government control of exports and imports, and the establishment of a Central Supply Board, interference in normal trading was in effect slight. There was no black-out, no air-raid precautions, and little sign of war restrictions save press and postal censorship. The date export was well organized under the new monopoly, and the British Government placed a large order for 'Iraqi barley, which was profitably fulfilled.

The Prime Minister announced on 4 September that 'Iraq would fully honour the terms of the British alliance, and thereunder would furnish all 'facilities and assistance' as provided in the Treaty. Of 'Iraq Army mobilization there was no question. Diplomatic relations with Germany were broken off, Germans interned and their property sequestrated, while their interests were entrusted to the Afghan Legation. Dr. Grobba left the country, and his propaganda organization was temporarily merged in that which had its centre at Teheran. Telegrams were exchanged between the Regent and King George VI, and every assurance given to the British Ambassador of 'Iraq's goodwill and acceptance of its obligations. Nuri Pasha's conceptions went, indeed, further than this; he envisaged a modification of the Sa'dabad Pact such as to lead to joint military and political action by its signatories, whom Egypt might join; but of such projects nothing was in fact realized.

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

The People's Party and that of National Union were finally suppressed in October for preaching sedition and rebellion. It was notorious that the strike in the Port of Baṣra during the summer had been Communist-organized, an activity of the illegal but vigorous Party of National Liberation and the Anti-Zionist League.

But no preoccupation of the Government and public during 1947 equalled that of the absorbing and saddening Palestine Question. If its appeal was less to the northern areas and to Shi'i circles and those of the minorities, the problem of Arab survival in Palestine against the threat of rich, ubiquitous, and ably directed Zionism, backed by American money and competing political interest (and supported by strong elements in Britain), excelled all others in the eyes of more and wider elements than any other foreign issue could interest. It aroused sincere and bitter sentiment as showing, it was felt, the full picture of Western injustice and cynicism, and it united all parties in a dangerous atmosphere of anti-European emotion. The London Conference of the autumn of 1946 and early 1947, attended by Fadhil Jamali, reached no agreement except in rejecting the compromise 'Morrison Plan' which had succeeded to the inept unrealities of the Anglo-American Commission. Early in 1947 a Bevin Plan for Partition was equally rejected, and the Palestine problem was referred by Great Britain to the United Nations, whose Sub-Committee of Five toured Palestine during the summer. After an infinity of intrigues and pressures at Lake Success in the autumn of the year the General Assembly, warned of Great Britain's intention to withdraw from Palestine in the absence of an agreed settlement, took its decision in November to divide Palestine finally into Jewish and Arab areas; the Mandate was to end, British troops to withdraw, Arab and Jewish States to come into existence, and a special régime to be established for Jerusalem.

The passage of a year of general outward tranquillity in 'Iraq, a creditable body of legislation passed or submitted, and some sound measures carried out—one of which was the first serious Census—concealed at the time the true force of the factors of discontent and potential violence which were actually present and were gaining strength. When Parliament was opened on 1 December the poorer classes, already seriously short of bread, were approaching desperation. The country was empty of food stocks. Militant Communists were still active, and eager to use present discontents for their objective of anarchy. The small but zealous political parties—anti-traditionalist, anti-British and largely anti-Western, narrowly and unrealistically 'nationalist'—were less powerless in mob-rousing than the orthodox or the complacent

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

theme for hostile schoolboy agitation in the streets of the capital. The Ministry's appeal for unity and tranquillity, and another by al-Ṣadr in person, were alike unheeded, and the work of administration, in which the Prime Minister had neither interest nor competence, was largely ignored. The near-famine conditions among the poorer classes could not be cured until after the harvest, which itself promised to be scanty; meanwhile an Australian grain ship was by British initiative diverted to Baṣra and its urgently needed stores distributed.

The death of Ḥamdi al-Pachachi on 27 March led to changes among the uneasy ministers. 'Umar Nadhmi had resigned and been replaced at Justice by Najib al-Rawi, who handed his portfolio of Social Affairs to Ḥaydari. Naṣrat had succeeded Madfa'i at Interior when the latter became President of the Senate, and was himself succeeded when he moved to Foreign Affairs by Muṣṭafā al-'Umari who could thus 'control' the forthcoming elections. The Amir al-Rabi'a resigned and went home in April. Muḥammad Mahdi al-Kubba left the Ministry early in June. The frequent absences of the Ministers of Finance and Justice at Arab League meetings led to constant interchange of ministerial duties, from which the shaken and demoralized Administration suffered.

The Chamber met on 26 June, after elections in which legal and illegal parties alike had put forth all their efforts, and which had produced street fighting in Kadhimiya, Baghdad, and Sulaymaniya. The Independence Party secured four seats, the National Democrats two, the Liberals one. All other deputies were free of party attachment and as such were likely to vote for any Ministry in power; it was clear that the enthusiasm, or the leadership, of the parties had still too little appeal to seduce the electorate from the familiar candidates of local importance in their constituencies or to resist the conservative influence of controlling officialdom. A Chamber—or an electorate—divided on true party lines was still an unrealizable conception.

The new Parliament was confronted, to its dismay, with a situation containing new and alarming features which events in Palestine had created. The United Nations decision for Partition, taken in November 1947, had led in 'Iraq as elsewhere to angry remonstrance, and in the Arab League to emergency meetings. But no hopeful measures could be taken or planned at these; the lines of cleavage within the League were already too clear, and most of the States members too doubtful of their own stability. The earlier decision to encourage the infiltration of guerrilla fighters from each country into Palestine, for the stiffening of local resistance, was carried out to a limited extent. Some hundreds—or, as some said, two battalions—of young and a few veteran

1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

Palestine—was common from 1932 until the mid-war period. It was probable that, with research and the establishment of a responsible authority not hitherto created, present production could be largely increased. Fishery development had in 1948 found its way into ministerial programmes; a trawler for use in the Shaṭṭ al-'Arab approaches was delivered in 1950, and a fish store was projected by the Agricultural Bank.

The history of 'Iraq's irrigation from 1946 to 1950 is one of rapid approach to, or even the partial realization of, prospects long desired and, through new-found wealth, by 1951 fully practicable. The call for heroic measures was the clearer since the disastrous floods of 1946 and 1948 and the acute grain shortage—in a territory of fabulous potential output!—in the latter year; and in 1946 the resources of the highly competent Irrigation Department were supplemented *ad hoc* by the appointment of a well-staffed Irrigation Commission under F. F. Haigh of the Indian Service of Engineers. Its object was to study and report on river control and irrigation, and to submit a programme. The Commission reported in June 1949.

The task of flood control and storage was to be carried out on the Euphrates by a completed and extended Ḥabbaniya–Abu Dibis project: on the Tigris, by the grandiose Wadi Tharthar project (in two stages), by the 'Gibraltar' dam on the Diyalā at its point of passage through the Jabal Ḥamrin, and by the Dukan dam on the Lesser Zab. These works, all pronounced practicable, would save 'Iraq from floods and would greatly increase its low-season resources. They would be accompanied by the development of irrigation in new areas by canals, headworks, barrages, and feeders on the middle Euphrates, the lesser Zab, the middle Tigris (in the areas commanded by the Ishaqi and Nahrwan canals), on the Diyalā river, and on the Gharraf and lower Tigris. Drainage was to be taken comprehensively in hand in both existing and projected irrigated areas, on lines which experiments made from 1940 to 1946 had shown to be practicable. Hydro-electric power was to be developed at the Samarrā headworks, the Wadi Tharthar outlet channel, and the Gibraltar and Dukan dams. Plans for the reclamation of the southern 'Iraqi swamps, and the re-formation of the lower Tigris, were suggested but not formulated. Of this gigantic programme, expected to cost some ID 90 million, about a quarter of the whole was to be undertaken immediately and finished within ten years: it would include the first part of the extended Ḥabbaniya and of the Wadi Tharthar schemes, the Gibraltar dam, drainage work, and the extension of existing irrigation in the Nahrwan and Gharraf areas and on the Euphrates. A large part of these plans was adopted by the Development

7: International Bank N, S-4 (1951) 1952 MH1 Iraq MH1

I. Introduction

311 Iraq possesses impressive potentialities for economic development. With a total population of about 5,000,000 and an area of 168,400 square miles, Iraq is sparsely populated in relation to its resources. Although all but a relatively narrow belt in the north and northeast has insufficient rainfall to sustain agriculture, the country's twin river systems—the Tigris and Euphrates—can provide large amounts of water for irrigation. Much of its soil is inherently fertile and with ample water, manpower and implements, the area under cultivation might be almost tripled. In oil, Iraq possesses not only a source of foreign exchange but also a cheap source of power and raw materials essential to the development of industry, agriculture and transportation; and it may have other mineral resources susceptible of commercial exploitation. There is little doubt that the country can ultimately maintain a much larger population on a considerably higher standard of living.

511 As yet, however, this economic potential is in sharp contrast to the poverty prevailing in Iraq. The standard of living of the people is extremely low. Income per capita is probably at most ID 30.[1] Almost 90 percent of the population are illiterate and many are subject to debilitating diseases such as malaria, hookworm and bilharzia. Housing and sanitation are for the most part primitive. The fundamental reasons for these conditions are low output and low productivity. Most of the manpower on the land is underemployed for a large part of the year, and considerable unemployment exists in the major cities. Vast tracts of land await reclamation and irrigation before they can be used. Much of the available water is wasted owing to lack of storage and regulation of flow. In the spring disastrous floods often inundate large areas; and in the fall water is acutely short. Agricultural output is hampered not only by the inadequate and irregular supply of water, but also by the progressive salination of the soil in the irrigated areas. Agricultural techniques are primitive, the number and quality of draft animals are inadequate and there is insufficient equipment. Industry is little developed. Although perhaps as many

[1] One Iraqi dinar equals £1 or $2.80.

7: International Bank N, S-4 (1951) 1952 MH1 Iraq MH1

312 133 [731] late to benefit winter crops and too early for summer crops. Destructive spring floods are apt to occur just before the harvesting of the winter crops begins and as the planting of summer crops is in process. In the dry season—July to December—which is critical for both summer and winter crops, the mean discharge of the Euphrates at Hit and the Tigris at Baghdad is only 421 cumecs (cubic meters per second) and 559 cumecs, respectively, as compared with 1,765 cumecs and 2,572 cumecs during the three peak months of the spring.[2] The Haigh Commission has calculated that the mean discharge which can be relied upon for irrigation is only 280 cumecs for the Euphrates and 350 cumecs for the Tigris and its tributaries. This supply would appear to be barely equal to the water needed for existing irrigation systems when figured on the basis of the standards usually applied in Iraq. In fact, at present there is an acute shortage of water in the irrigated areas of the Diyala Valley and the Hilla canal system while in other areas water is wasted. Short of radical economies in the use of water, which can only be realized over the long term, no significant extension of the irrigated area can be undertaken without controlling and regulating the flow of the rivers. Nor can disastrous floods be controlled without schemes for the storage of the excess waters.

The Euphrates

653 312 A project for the regulated diversion of the flood waters of the Euphrates into Lake Habbaniya is already under way. This project involves the construction of an inlet channel from the Euphrates near Ramadi to the lake as well as an outlet channel for the later release of the stored waters. A barrage will be built across the Euphrates at Warrar to raise the water level and thus permit an increase in the capacity of the lake reservoir. The outlet channel and regulator are already finished and work is well advanced on the inlet channel and its regulator. The project when completed will reduce the flood discharge from a possible maximum of 5,200 cumecs to 2,000 cumecs and will increase the minimum supply of water available for irrigation from 280 cumecs to perhaps 440 cumecs. The total cost is estimated at ID 4,300,000.

[2] See chart and also Tables I and II in the appendix.

*539 ONCE in the days of the Ottomans there lived in Baghdad a man of an ancient and noble family named Sheikh Mizeil el Qurnachi, and he lived [651 in a great house by the banks of the Tigris. Yet his estates 731] had been reduced by the taxation and oppression of the Ottomans, and his crops spoiled by locust and by flood until he was reduced to poverty.

So he lived in his house with his only daughter without a single servant or a single slave, nor was there any furniture or silver left in his house, for he had sold all to buy [432] food. Yet the house he could not sell, for it would be shameful for him to do so, since it was the house of his ancestors.

The name of his daughter was Nura. She was in the [203] seventeenth year of her life, yet none had asked for her in marriage, for since there were no servant girls to gossip about her beauty, the boys of great and noble families had not even heard of her. Else surely their sleep would have been troubled by her description, for her hair was as black as the Shatt el Arab on a clear winter's night, and her eyes were as the stars which glisten in its waters, her skin was as golden as the desert sand when tinged by the first rosy red rays of dawn, her back was as supple as the reeds before the wind, and her thighs and breasts had the softness of the feather quilt which allures the tired traveller.

So one day Nura went to her father and she said to him: O my beloved father, my state is thus and thus. Shall I be forever a cook in your household or shall I be the mother of noble sons? And Sheikh Mizeil grieved much at the words of his daughter, and his heart was sad. And on the nights of the full moon Nura would go out on the roof of their great house, and speak to the moon and ask the question:

489 [509] air traffic—useful only to a small number of travellers and for valuable goods—is very heavy in Iraq, which forms a veritable turn-table, a sort of Belgium or Switzerland in Western Asia: Iraq's two airports serve as junctions between the United States and Europe on the one hand and the Far East on the other.

For inland transport on the other hand, Iraq is much less well served: shipping on the historically famous "twin rivers" is very limited and in fact only uses part of the Tigris. The country's railway system is inadequate, there is no standard gauge and the rolling-stock needs to be increased and modernized. The road system has been developed and motor transport (mainly by lorry) is steadily increasing; but it is paralysed on many roads during the rainy season and in numerous places it is at the mercy of the floods: the disastrous flooding of the Tigris in May 1950, particularly serious around Baghdad, will be remembered. [731]

Observers point out that a matter deserving special attention is the co-ordination of river and rail

21: Fisher S-4 (no date) 1950 M1 Middle East
Iraq MH1

Only three cities, Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra, have a total population exceeding 100,000. *Baghdad* (population 1943, 300,000) lies on the Tigris at the head of navigation of the river, and in the 'waist' of the lowlands, where the Tigris and Euphrates approach closely to each other, and hence give the best possibility of constructing irrigation canals. This narrow inter-riverine zone also provides a convenient crossing-place, since the marshland is reduced in extent and the firmer platform of steppeland provides a useful east-west route between the Mediterranean and Iran. The region of Baghdad thus has an important nodal position at the junction of routes from east and west across the desert, and from north, north-east, and south along the river valleys. It should be noted that all the factors mentioned above apply to a region and not to an actual site.

It is easy to see why a town should have grown up within the district of Baghdad, but the extra smaller scale features that usually fix the site of a town in one particular spot are less in evidence. Local changes in topography due to the shifting of drainage channels have led to the growth of three separate cities at various periods, and so within the Baghdad region there has arisen first Babylon, the ancient capital that lay closer to the Euphrates, some 60 miles to the south of modern Baghdad. Babylon was in turn succeeded by Ctesiphon, only a few miles from Baghdad, and this city remained the nodal centre until superseded by Baghdad in the early Muhammadan era. Baghdad itself dates only from the 8th century A.D., and a 'golden age' occurred when its Abbasid rulers supplanted the Omeyyads of Damascus and made it the capital of the Moslem world. Baghdad suffered greatly from Mongol invasion, and most of the older buildings have disappeared. The modern city is sprawling and undistinguished—in fact, an extreme disappointment to visitors who may wish to evoke the 'Arabian Nights'. Many of the poorer houses are of mud, and flooding is a frequent feature (Fig. 65).

Baghdad is the commercial centre of the region, with numerous, but small workshops and distributing houses. Industry is, as we have seen, mainly confined to bazaar crafts—textiles, metals, foodstuffs—and to the production of pottery and building materials. Trade is for the most part in the hands of Europeans, Jews, and Armenians, with Iraqi Christians as clerks and supervisors. An upper class—mainly Sunni Moslems—carries on the administration of the country; and a third element in the life of the city is a large group of absentee landlords.